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An Essay On

INDIAN CULTURE:

Its Spiritual, Moral and Social Aspects

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Its Spiritual, Moral and Social Aspects

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Thanks to the discoveries and inventions of modern science, the world is fast becoming one. No part of the world is now too far away from another, and no community living on earth is unconnected and uninfluenced by another. In every aspect of our life we are affected by every movement originating in every part of the world. After the last great war every problem connected with human life has taken an international turn. Health, food, clothes, housing, defence, recreation and education of any country or community are no longer isolated problems. They have to be tackled in reference to those of others. The U.N.O. and Unesco are providing common international platforms for discussion of far-reaching and vital problems of humanity as a whole. Greater and greater contact of people of various countries, races and communities and more and more knowledge of each other's culture gradually tend to evolve a common world culture in which in course of time the best elements of the various cultures of the world may be incorporated and synthesized. It is time now that this process should be accelerated and consciously planned. Hence the praiseworthy attempt of Unesco in the form of a Cultural Enquiry.

LURE OF INDIAN CULTURE

My recent tour round the world, particularly in Europe and America, and the enormous correspondence I am having from European and American young men and women have brought home to me how desperately and keenly the West is now interested in the religion, philosophy and culture of India. During a short sojourn I was asked to speak on the Indian outlook on life's problems no less than two hundred times and the audience everywhere evinced keen interest in the lectures, talks and discussions. Quite a large number of university students of Europe and America have expressed their keen desire to come to Benares to study Indian culture. It is indeed surprising and gratifying to know with what reverence and high hopes they look upon Indian culture.

A student from Pasadena College, California, writes, "What most people today, at least in the United States, consider an education I do not ... I believe so strongly in the Indian ideals presented in the Bhagawadgita, Upanishads and other Vedanta Scriptures. I want a usable practical, spiritual knowledge, not a degree". A student from the University of Chicago writes, "Our realization that at least a general

outline of Hindu psychological theory, as presented in your lecture... is more adequate to deal with our proposed study than anything to be found in orthodox American psychology". A student from Vienna writes,"Owing to many events and occurrences in the last two years of my life, my interest has more and more tended toward the line I now desire to take, viz: Indology." "I have become a Hindu convert and I am trying to sever the bonds that tie me to European culture and civilization, having realized and experienced that these can in no way fit to my mental make-up and disposition. Not that I am against the western way of living, but I do not believe that the latter is essential as a condition for acquiring such knowledge as seems solely valuable to me". A student from Walla Walla, Washington writes, "My readings in the field of classics of Indian literature have convinced me that the meagre and rather immature culture and the philosophies of my country would be immeasurably benefited by the intimate contact with the Oriental thought and culture." A gentleman from Prague, Czechoslovakia,writes, "As a matter of fact I am vitally interested in the whole of Indian spiritual life, in its search of truth, in its ways to attain wisdom and illumination. For many years I have counted myself a humble pupil in this special path. I have no doubt that sooner or later my contact with India will become a vibrant reality with deep effects on my spiritual life". "My interest in Indian Culture, especially in Indian Philosophy, has grown too deep to allow any relaxing, and it is still my ardent desire to get in personal touch with the spiritual realities which blossomed upon India's soil... I shall be extremely happy if my aspirations in this field can find their fulfilment". An M.A. of Oxford University writes, "It is Indian Philosophy in particular that I wish to study... It is my innermost and greatest wish,though Scottish by birth, to settle in India to give whatever I have to help your country to build itself up after its own fashion -- now that it is free from the Western yoke. This may sound strange from a Western person, but it is nevertheless sincere. I have made a fairly considerable study of Hindu Religion, and I find it in every way more satisfactory than my own." A student from New York writes, "My purpose in coming to India is two-fold. I would like to get a good grounding in Indian Philosophy and Religion and also to develop spiritual discipline with which I have eventually to arrive at the "intuitive" knowledge of God". A gentleman from Ohio, U.S.A., writes, "I have wanted to travel in the Orient and near East for some years and certainly to study there... We are happy in this country to see so many of your people coming over to learn some of our methods. If they employ some of our technology with their native spirit, I should think it would be a very potential combination. If the West is truly declining this is all the more important." A highly qualified German Professor writes, "I would feel happy if I could lecture at an Indian University as I am an admirer of Indian Philosophy,Culture and of Indian people. I took a degree in Sanskrit with Prof. Hertel, Leipzig, in 1921, in order to study Indian Philosophy...It is the deepest desire of my life to be helpful in such a way in a country which I admire and love".

Such extracts from my correspondence can be multiplied to any number. They indicate the interest the West has now begun to take in Indian culture. The Western youth has begun to realize the value of a culture which may be a good supplement to that of his own, perhaps because the latter is not deep and comprehensive enough to satisfy all the aspirations of man. Considering the growing interest of the American youth in Indian culture and the eagerness of India to acquire the American technical skill and scientific knowledge, a friend in Hollywood aptly remarked in a semi-prophetic manner, "In course of time America is going to become India and India is soon going to become America". My reaction to this statement was, "The real good of the world lies in the whole world becoming America and India both at the same time". I am in good company in thinking like this. Serious thinkers and mature minds of the West are now realizing the need of grafting the best elements of Indian culture on the mighty tree of western civilization. Professor Northrop aptly ends his well-known and thoughtful work, The Meeting of the East and the West with the following suggestion and wish, "It should eventually be possible to achieve a society for mankind generally in which the higher standard of living of the most scientifically advanced and theoretically guided Western nations is combined with the compassion, the universal sensitivity to the beautiful, and the abiding equanimity and the calm joy of the spirit which characterize the sages and many of the humblest people in the Orient". (The Meeting of the East and the West, p. 496). A well known English thinker and author feels that there is a great need of supplementing the scientific method of acquiring knowledge with the Indian way of acquiring wisdom. He writes in a letter, "I always feel (although I know so little about it) that it is to the early teachings of India that we should turn for enlightenment; for the scientific methods of the West have narrowed our outlook far too much by causing us to concentrate far too exclusively on the external world of senses. I am hoping for the time when Eastern and Western thought interpenetrates one another".

This desire to incorporate the best elements of Indian culture in the evolving world-culture is based not only on the natural fascination of the western mind and heart for the distant and unknown. Unfamiliarity and distance do often lend charm to objects. But it is also based on the sound judgment of those few Western scholars, thinkers and critics who have dived deep into the wisdom of India and have unreservedly expressed their appreciation of Indian culture. Max Müller was one of the earliest European scholars, who made himself acquainted with a few works of Indian religious and philosophical thought. In his well known work, India: What Can It Teach us ?, he writes, "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe -- we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of the Greeks and the Romans, and of one Semetic race the Jewish -- may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life not for this

life only, but a transfigured and eternal life, again I should point to India". (Max Müller: India: What Can It Teach Us? p.6). Sir John Woodroffe, an English Judge of the Calcutta High Court, who made himself acquainted with Indian philosophy, writes in one of his books, "An examination of the Indian Vedantic Doctrine shows that it is, in important aspects, in conformity with the most advanced scientific and philosophic thought of the West and where it is not so, it is the science which will go to Vedanta and not the reverse" (Woodroffe: The World As Power -- Power As Reality, p.6). According to Paul Brunton, who has become fairly well acquainted with Indian mysticism, "India holds an ancient heritage of spiritual thought from its past which stands unparalleled for profundity and unmatched for width". (Brunton: Wisdom of the Over-Self, p.19). According to Cannon, who has widely travelled in the East and has come in touch with many mystics and occultists, "India and Tibet can teach us more about Psychology and workings of the mind than any Freud, Jung, Adler, or any exponent of any other movement" (Cannon: The Invisible Influences, p. 33). It is no wonder, therefore, that the peace-loving and truth-seeking people of the West have become deeply interested in Indian culture.

It is in fact now time that what is best anywhere in the world in the field of knowledge and wisdom should be brought within the reach of every man and woman living on the earth by those means of quick propagation which modern science has placed in our hands. Every human being has a claim to all that is best in any culture of the world. And particularly in Indian culture, which has never claimed itself to belong to any particular race, country or colour.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN CULTURE

From time immemorial Indians have been calling their culture by the name of Human Culture (Mānava Dharma or Mānava Sanskriti). It has tried to be so comprehensive as to suit the needs of every human being, irrespective of age, sex, colour or race. As such, it has a universal appeal. Without any attempt at conversion, people get converted to it. Without any state support for the last several hundreds of years, and in spite of incessant attempts of barbarous foreign invaders to root it out from the soil of India, it has flourished and endured well. Although born and brought up in India, in the past it spread over almost all parts of the earth. History has not been able to trace its beginning, hence it is taken in India as beginningless (anādi). It has always existed in time and it shows no sign of decay or death; hence it is spoken of as eternal (sanātana). It is called Vaidic because the earliest literature in which it found expression is the Veda, the oldest books known to the world. It is called Hindu Culture, Indian Culture, because it flourished in its earliest stages on this (eastern) side of the river Indus, which is the same as Sindhus or Hindus in various languages.

INDIAN CULTURE THE MOST ANCIENT CULTURE OF THE WORLD AND MOTHER OF ALL CULTURES

Of all the cultures of the world known to man, Indian culture is perhaps the oldest, and, according to many historians, the mother of all cultures. Scientific history has yet to discover much about India and has to correct many of its notions which are inconsistent with Indian

traditions well-preserved in Sanskrit works. Some Western scholars have already become convinced of the great antiquity of Indian culture and history. Count Bjornstjerna, for example, writes, "No nation on earth can vie with the Hindus in respect of the antiquity of their civilization and the antiquity of their religion" (Theogony of the Hindus, p.50). According to Halbed, "To such antiquity the Mosaic creation is but as yesterday; and to such ages the life of Methuselah is no more than a span" (Quoted in Sarda: Hindu Superiority, p.4).

The ancient Indians were perhaps the earliest civilized people on the earth, and their sons believe that all other countries derived their civilization from India. Following the injunction of Manu, one of the earliest leaders of Indian culture, that the Brahmans of India shall go to various parts of the world to teach their inhabitants how to live properly (Manusmriti) the Vedic injunction that "The civilized people (āryas) ought to make the whole world civilized", quite a large number of Indians went out to various near and distant parts of the world by all possible routines in all directions, and settled there on their mission of civilizing the native inhabitants. Indian scholars hold as factual truth "That India planted colonies in all parts of the world, and that these colonies afterwards became known as Egypt, Greece, Persia, China, America, etc.; and that Scandinavia, Germany and ancient Britain derived their civilization and their religion from the Hindus". "The migrations from India, as stated before, took place eastwards as well as westwards and northwards. The eastern migrations were in the Trans-gangetic peninsula, to China, to the Islands of Indian Archipelago, and to America. The northern and the north-western to Turkistan, Siberia, Scandinavia, Germany and Britain, as well as to Persia, Greece, Rome and Etruria. The western, to the Eastern parts of Africa and thence to Egypt. We find that Egypt, Persia, Assyria and Greece all derived their learning and civilization from India and that the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Grecian, the German, the Scandinavian and the Druidic Mythologies were all derived from Hindu Mythology" (H.B. Sarda: Hindu Superiority, p.8 and p.144). Space does not permit us to refer to all the authorities on which this conclusion is based. Recently, an Indian author, Chaman Lal, has collected sufficient evidence to support the thesis that the earliest discoverers of America were Hindus, some of whom settled there and civilized the natives. He writes in the Preface to his work, Hindu America, "My thesis is that the ancient civilizations (whether Astecs, Maya or Inca) of the two Americas owe their origin to the Hindu culture of India. The citations from the works of authorities of recognized merit and the record of my own personal observations of the life and customs of the Indians, which I have given in the present book, will prove that my thesis is correct. Eminent research workers like Hewitt, Mackenzie, Tod, Pococke, Mrs.Nuttal and others have collected plenty of data which go to show that the ancient American civilizations were influenced by Hindu culture and that the Surya-Vansho (Children of the Sun) rulers of India established kingdoms in Asia, Europe and America. Hindus were great colonizers, traders and adventurers. It is interesting to study the mighty impulses that led them not only to establish contacts with the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the world but also to migrate and settle down there".

A recent work, Hindu Culture in Greater India, by Swami Sadananda, has given a very good account of the remains of Hindu culture and civilization in Bali, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Cambodia, Anam, Malaya and Siam. According to the author, who has travelled in all these lands, Bali is still a stronghold of Hindu culture. Its inhabitants still call themselves Hindus. They still have reverence for the Vedas, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavadgita. Their language is full of Sanskrit words. Java was a stronghold of Hinduism until the end of the 14th century. Even now the Ramayana and the Mahabharata influence the life of the Javanese. The old sculpture and architecture of Java, especially the Borobudur temple, speak of the imperishable influence of Hindu culture. Relics of Hindu culture are found in abundance in Sumatra, which was called Swarnadwipa in ancient times. Borneo was called Varunadwipa. It has ruins of many Hindu temples and the names of many of its towns are of Sanskrit origin. Cambodia is mentioned as Kambhoja in Sanskrit texts. It was a Hindu colony some 2,000 years ago and its architecture and sculpture, and particularly Angkor Vat, the ancient capital, now existing in ruins, speak of the glory of Hindu culture which flourished there. Hindu influence is very clearly seen in the architecture, sculpture, beliefs and customs of the customs of Anam which was called Champa in ancient times. Even after centuries of Muslim conquest, Hindu influence if clearly visible today in the language, customs and life of the people of Malaya. The whole of Siam now called Thailand is dotted with the remains of Hindu architecture. The Siamese script and words of the Siamese language are of Indian origin. Siamese culture is deeply rooted in Indian culture.

Another Indian writer, Ganga Prasad, a civil judge, has devoted himself to the study of the origin of the various religions of the world, and on sufficient documentary evidence, has come to the conclusion that India was the Fountain-head of Religion. He has put forward a thesis that all the existing religions of the world have"their common origin from the Vedic teaching", while as Max Muller, the great western Vedic scholar held, "The Vedic religion was the only one the development of which took place without any extraneous influence" (Max Muller: India: What Can It Teach Us? p.129). This writer concludes his book, The Fountainhead Of Religion with the following words, "We have followed up the stream of Religion along the diverse main channels in which it flows or has flowed in successive ages. The Koran and the Bible lead us to the Zend Avesta and the latter to the Vedas. Thence we can proceed no further.... Are we then not justified in saying that the Vedas are the Fountain-head of Religion" (Ganga Prasad: The Fountain-head of Religion, p.176).

INDIA THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE INDO-ARYANS

Do all these studies not go against the current notion that India was colonized by the "Aryans" coming from outside India and that it was not the original home of the Aryans who founded the Vedic culture which was the foundation of Indian or Hindu culture? Whatever grounds the Western historians may have in support of the theory, those who are acquainted with the Indian tradition and literature regard it as nothing more than a myth based on inconclusive evidence. A young Indian historian has studied the problem with reference to the Indian tradition embodied

in the Puranas, a very valuable kind of Sanskrit literature, and has come to the following conclusion, "The original home of the Indo-Aryans was Madhyadesa (Mid-India). Its centre lay between Ayodhya and Pratisthana (Allahabad) where the first two Aryan dynasties (the Solar and the Lunar ones) arose. It roughly included, in its expanded form the whole of the United Provinces and Bihar, the Eastern Punjab up to the river Saraswati and the eastern portion of Central India". "With their original centre at Ayodhya and Pratisthana, they expanded towards east, south and west. Instead of invading India through N-W.passes and marching towards east, the Aryans advanced from Madhyadesa towards N-W.beginning from the early migration of some of the near descendents of Iksvaku up to the westward conquest of the Panchala king Sudasa". "The Aryans did not only expand inside India and occupied the whole of Uttarpatha (N.W. India), but they also crossed the N-W. passes of India and occupied the countries now covered by Afghanistan, Central Asia, Persia and Western Asia up to the Mediterranean sea" (R.B. Pandey: "The Pauranic Data on the Original Home of The Indo-Aryans", The Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta, Vol.XXIV, No.2, June 1948).

THE SECRET OF THE LONGEVITY OF INDIAN CULTURE

In spite of its being so old, Indian culture is still vigorously alive and does not show any sign of weakness, decay or death. The fact that India has won its freedom from the yoke of the mightiest of all empires by following its own indigenous method under the leadership of a saint, Mahatma Gandhi, who was in the unbroken line of the saints and sages of India, is a sufficient indication of the great vitality and strength of Indian culture. What is the secret of its longevity and imperishability? In his Why Religions Die, a work small in size but great in worth, Professor J.B. Pratt of America, makes a few observations about Hindu Religion, which, according to him, has lived through long ages and is the only one religion which tends to survive the present crisis in the life of all religions, which to some extent touch our problem. According to him Hinduism, which he calls by the name of "Vedic Way" is a "self-perpetuating" religion. "The Vedic way ... the way of constant spiritual reinterpretation...leads to life - life which is self-perpetuating, self-renewing, and which for the individual and for the world may be eternal". Unlike other religions it did not die. "Not death, but development" has been the fate of Hinduism. "That which in it was vital and true cast off the old shell and clothed itself in more suitable expression, with no break in the continuity of life and no loss in the sanctity and weight of its authority". Generalizing on the secret of longevity of the Vedic religion, Professor Pratt says, "If a religion is to live it must adapt itself to new and changing conditions; if it is to feed the spiritual life of its children, it must have the sensivity and inventiveness that shall enable it to modify their diet as their needs demand" (Pratt: Why Religions Die?, p.122). Not only Hindu religion, but the whole culture of the Hindus has been growing, changing and developing in accordance with the needs of time and circumstances, without losing its essential and imperishable spirit. The culture of the Vedic age, of the ages of the Upanishads, the philosophical systems, the Mahabharata, the Smritis, the Puranas, the commentators, the medieval saints and of the age of the modern reformers, is the same in spirit yet very differnt in forms. It is the same today in spirit as it was in the

Vedic times, yet the culture of today is very much different from what it was in the age of the Vedas. Another secret of the vitality of Hindu religion, and also of the Indian culture, as pointed out by Pratt, is its wide catholicity. He says, "Mutually contradictory creeds can and do keep house together without quarrel within the wide and hospitable Hindu family". "Hindu thought... because of its ingrained conclusiveness, its tolerance, and its indifference to doctrinal divergences, stressed the essential unity of all Indian Dharmas, whether Hindu or Buddhist, and minimized differences". This tolerance of differences of opinion and creed within its own fold and even outside itself is an essential characteristic of Indian culture. This characteristic attitude is beautifully expressed in the following statement of the Yogavāsistha: "All the diverse doctrines and paths originating at different times and in different countries, however, lead ultimately to the same Supreme Truth, like the many different paths leading travellers from different places to the same city. It is ignorance of the Absolute Truth and misunderstanding of the different doctrines that cause their followers to quarrel in bitter animosity with one another. They consider their own particular dogmas and paths to be the best, as every traveller may think, though wrongly, his own path to be the only and the best path" (Y.V.III.96.51, 52, 53.) Every seeker of truth and perfection is allowed in Hindu society to pursue his own method freely, and nobody is expected to interfere or meddle with it. The Yogavāsistha says, "The method by which a man makes spiritual progress is the best for him. He should not change it for another, which may not look right to him, nor pleases him, nor is useful to him" (Yogavāsistha, VIb.130.2). Mutually conflicting opinions can be held under the auspices of Indian culture and a higher synthetic principle is very often discovered to comprehend all of them. A typical illustration of liberal adjustment to others' opinion is found in the Yogavāsistha in connexion with the nature of the Ultimate Reality, "The Ultimate Reality is called Sunya (Nothing) by the Nihilist, Brahman by the Vedantists, Purusa by the Sankhya philosophers, Ishwara by the followers of the Yoga school, Shiva by the Shaivas, Time by those who believe it to be time, Self by those who take it to be the Self, Not-self by those who do not believe in Self to be the ultimately real thing, Something between being and non-being by the Madhyamikas, and the 'All' by those who think so." (Yogavāsistha,V.87.18-20). Every Hindu prays to the Ultimate Power behind and pervading the Universe in the following way. "May the Lord of all the three worlds hear and answer our prayer -- the Lord Hari (Vishnu) whom the Shaivites call Shiva, the Vedantists call Brahman, the Buddhists call the Buddha, the Logicians (Naiyayikas) call the Creator, the Jains call Arhat, and the Mimamsakas call Karma (the Law of Karma)". In a modern version of the same prayer, a Hindu composer has also included the names of God, Allah, Yehovah and Ahurmazda, as the Christians, Muslims, Jews and Parsis call Him. This tolerance of Hindu culture has become a philosophy which goes by the name of Anekānta-vāda according to which the Reality, and as a matter of fact, every expression of it, has innumerable aspects and every thinker views it from one or the other aspect, and, therefore, his view and judgment about the same object are bound to differ from those of others who look upon the object from another angle of vision. A corollary of this doctrine of many-sidedness of reality is found in what is called the doctrine of Syādvāda, which means the use of restraint or caution in making judgments. It is a very healthy principle always to remember that our judgments are

partial truths and can never be absolutely true. It is on account of this catholicity and this humility which characterize Hindu culture that religious, doctrinal, philosophical and ideological differences among people and communities have not tended to mar the general advancement of the cultural life of the country. All the discordant notes ultimately brought about greater and greater harmony in the culture of the country. Whatever the political, linguistic, racial and religious difference from part to part of the country, one never misses to find a common culture flourishing in India from Kailash to Kanyākumarī (Cape Comorin) and from Jagannatha Puri to Dwarka. Pratt rightly remarks, "The tendency of Hinduism to absorb its children, and the urge felt by its rebelling children to fall back into the family fold has been illustrated many times in Indian history. The process is going on today" (Why Religions Die). It is because Hindu culture is not averse to and shy of foreign elements. It has grown vigorous in every age by absorbing all that was best in the culture with which it came into contact.

In ancient times there was much give and take between the Greeks and the Indians. Within the first century of the birth of Christianity India welcomed it and absorbed its best elements into its own culture. In the medieval times it made its own all that was best in Islamic culture, although Islam came to India as a very hostile creed. And now in modern times, slowly and gradually Indian culture is absorbing all that is best in the scientific civilization of the West without losing any of its vital elements. The Benares Hindu University, the first national attempt in education in India, came into existence with a conscious object of preserving all that is best in Indian Religion, Philosophy, Art and Literature and absorbing all that is best in western science. The objects of the University were stated thus, in 1916 when the foundation stone of the University was laid: "To promote the study of the Hindu Shastras and of Sanskrit literature as a means of preserving and popularizing the best thought and culture of the Hindus, and all that was good and great in the ancient civilization of India; to promote learning and research in arts and sciences in all branches; to advance and diffuse such scientific, technical and professional knowledge, combined with the necessary practical training; and to promote the building up of character in youth by making religion and ethics an integral part of education". Thus, it has been the spirit of Indian culture throughout its history to keep the windows of its mind and heart wide open to receive inspiration and light from all possible quarters and sources. Hence it has been living, growing and developing in every age. The future seems to be equally promising, as the foundations of the renewed structure of India have been laid on the bed-rock of truth and non-violence.

THE MOST ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF INDIAN CULTURE

The most essential feature of Indian culture, which perhaps distinguishes it from the modern scientific culture of the West, is a thorough-going understanding of the nature of Man and his relations with other beings in the universe and with the Universe as a whole. From time immemorial India has tried to build its civilization on the basis of this knowledge. Man being a part and product of Nature, India approached Nature through man, because it is in himself alone that man can be most aware of Reality. There are many more aspects of reality open to man in himself than those which sense-observation of external nature reveals to

him. Modern science, which confines its knowledge to the observation of the sensible and measurable alone, cannot fathom deep into the nature of reality. Some great scientists have confessed it in recent times. Sir Arthur Eddington writes, "That science is concerned with the rational correlation of experience rather than with the discovery of fragments of absolute truth about an external world is a view which is now widely accepted". (Eddington: The Philosophy of Physical Science, p. 184). By "experience" here is meant "sensory awareness". According to Sir James Jeans, another great scientist, "Our studies can never put us into contact with reality; we can never penetrate beyond the impressions that reality implants in our minds". (Jeans: Philosophy and Physics, p. 15). "A science which confines itself to correlating the phenomena can never learn anything about the reality underlying the phenomena" (Ibid, p. 181). "The true object of scientific study can never be the realities of nature, but only our own observations on nature" (Ibid, p. 175). G. N. M. Tyrrell writes, "The world of science is not, in fact, an access of deeper insight into the nature of things, but rather an artificially separated view of reality, or a peep of the world seen from one particular angle" (Tyrrell: Grades of Significance, p.48). How can then science give us knowledge of the real nature of man and of the deeper, imperceptible and immeasurable aspects of nature? All the sciences taken together cannot do that, not to say anything of physical and psychological sciences alone. Modern psychology which makes use of the methods of modern science has been running more and more away from the real and inner man and is satisfying itself with certain observations, generalizations and correlations of physical, chemical, physiological and biological reactions of human body. It avoids all reference to soul, mind and consciousness which science cannot observe, measure and record. For it the human personality is nothing more than a "reaction mass", "an individual's total assets and liabilities on the reaction side" (J. B. Watson). Modern science thus leaves out of account all that man considers most important and valuable in himself. It has devised no method yet to understand the real nature of soul, consciousness and mind, not to say anything of God. Although scientific knowledge has proved very informative, useful and practical, it has tended to shut our eyes to the deeper nature of man and the universe, and consequently we miss much of what we ought to have known. Ignorance is not so harmful as the denial of the existence of that of which we are ignorant. And there is a tendency on the part of modern man to deny the existence of that of which we are ignorant. He is confined to the outskirts of man and the universe, lives on the surface of life and is building a civilization which concerns more with the husk than with the grain of life. Hence the growing dissatisfaction with the modern way of life in the minds of those who are gifted with deeper awareness. Alexis Carrel, the well-known author of Man the Unknown and an eminent scientist, deplores this state of things and suggests that "The only possible remedy for this evil is much more profound knowledge of ourselves" (Man the Unknown). It is this - 'profound knowledge of ourselves' - that mainly characterizes Indian culture. All that is there in Indian culture of lasting value, is based on the deeper knowledge of man and the universe. A few of the countless aspects of the culture are selected here for a general and popular treatment.

THE PLACE OF DISCIPLINE IN LIFE

Indian word for culture is Sanskriti which comes from a root which means to purify, to transform, to sublimate, to mould and to perfect. A cultured man is a disciplined man, who has brought his natural propensities under control and has shaped himself in accordance with the ideal placed before him by his ethical consciousness. Manu, one of the earliest leaders of Indian social thought, says that by nature (birth) we are all barbarous, uncultured and uncivilized. It is discipline or sanskāra that raises us to a higher status in life. Indian psychologists agree with the modern psychologists that man shares with animals quite a number of natural propensities or instinctive urges which drive him to action. These they call pravrittis or drives. They, however, make a distinction between man and animals in the former's being endowed by nature with a power of discrimination and control, called buddhi (intelligence). Buddhi enables man not only to discriminate between the proper and improper exercise of a natural propensity but also to control all the propensities by weakening some, strengthening others and ordering others to wait for their satisfaction. That man is an animal man (pashu) who lives only in accordance with the dictates of his momentary and unorganized animal passions. Man stands between animals and gods. He can by his conduct rise higher to the level of gods or can fall down to the level of animals. If we make a proper use of our power of discriminitive control and shape ourselves into the ideal picture which the great seers and leaders of humanity have placed before us, we can become divine and our society heavenly. Indian thinkers have given us various types of ideals that may suit diverse men and women and worked out in minutest details the processes through which the ideals are realized in life. Discipline is the key to all greatness, spiritual and moral. The general name for discipline is yoga. The Bhagavadgita is a small treatise on all kinds of discipline leading to all kinds of perfection. It is one of the most valuable guides for humanity.

THREE ASPECTS OF HUMAN NATURE AND THE PROCESS OF PERFECTING THEM

According to Indian psychologists, human consciousness has three main aspects, viz., awareness (jnāna) desire tinged with emotions (ichchhā) and activity (kriyā). They correspond to what the modern psychologists call cognition, affection and conation. Perfection of man should proceed along all these lines, and the perfected man is conceived as one who is fully aware of his nature, of his environment and of his relations with all beings around him; who has a control over his desires and passions; and who acts rightly under all circumstances and thus has never to repent for what he has done. There is a definite process of perfecting each of the aspects of man. That which widens his awareness is called jnāna yoga (yoga of knowledge), that which brings about control over his desires and emotions is called bhakti yoga (yoga of devotion); and that which trains him in righteousness and disinterested performance of duty is called karma yoga (yoga of action). Besides these three chief yogas there are many other yogas which aim at the control, training and perfection of one or the other factors of human personality. Hātha yoga, for example, aims at the control, and perfection of the physical body. The Kundalini yoga aims at awakening into operation the dormant and potential powers of man which are at present beyond his consciousness and control. The Raja yoga aims at the experience of Samādhi through gradual control and concentration of mind. It makes

one aware not only of the unconscious aspects and powers of one's mind but also of many supernormal aspects and powers of which one is ordinarily little aware. Cultivation of this and of many other yogas bestow on man unimaginable and innumerable powers of knowledge and action, some of which have recently been discovered by researches in Parapsychology and Psychics. Lest a yogi should make an evil use of his powers, as modern scientists under the control of political leaders of ambitious communities do, he is first trained in strict observance of certain moral principles called Yama and Niyama (Restraints and Rules), which are considered as the first two stages of the process of yoga. These yamas, restraints or controls are: (1) Ahimsā, freedom from illwill against all beings at all times and in all ways; (2) Satya, truthfulness; (3) Asteya, abstinence from Misappropriation of others' property; (4) Brahmacharya, celibacy or sexual purity; and (5) Aparigraha, freedom from avarice. And the Rules or Observances are: (1) Shaucha, cleanliness, external as well as internal; (2) Santosha, contentment; (3) Tapas, austerity or hard life; (4) Swādhyāya, study; and (5) Ishwara-pranidhāna, surrender to God. Mahatma Gandhi laid great emphasis on these restraints and observances and expected every one of his countrymen to follow at least the first two of them, namely Truth and Non-violence.

MAN AT BOTTOM IS SPIRIT WHICH IS IDENTICAL WITH THE SPIRIT IN AND BEHIND THE UNIVERSE

The Indian knowledge of man, and of the Universe whose product and part he is, has gone too deep to be fathomed by the methods of modern science. By their yogic methods, Indian seers discovered that man was a microcosm in which the whole macrocosm is represented. They think that the only way to understand Nature generally and in all its aspects is to know man completely through the various processes of Yoga. They did not depend merely on the sensory observation. They refined and perfected the processes of Introspection, Intuition and Samadhi (mystic experience) and through them they opened the gates of the vast unconscious and the limitless superconscious strata of being lying within them. They dived much deeper into the nature of man than any kind of external observation can do. They discovered that man is a centre of a circle whose circumference is nowhere, that his dimensions are infinite in extent, and that in his deeper nature he is one and identical with the deepest and ultimate Spirit that holds, supports, sustains and pervades the Universe. What we ordinarily know and see of man is a very small part of him. In his ultimate essence he is one with the essence of the world. The Upanishads proclaim this truth in very unequivocal and bold language. "This Self is the Absolute Reality" (ayam ātma Brahma); "I am the Absolute" (Aham Brahma asmi); "Thou art That" (Tat twam asi); and "Everything is the Absolute" (sarvan khālu idam Brahma), are some of the many "great assertions" (mahā-vākyāni) of the Upanishads. In one place we read in an Upanishad, "The Spirit that is in man and the Spirit that is in the Sun are one and identical" (sa yascha ayam purusho yascha asau Āditye sa eka). The Christ had a glimpse of this truth when he uttered "I and my father are one". According to Indian seers not only man but also all things and creatures in the universe are rooted in one and the same Absolute Reality which is spiritual in essence. No description of its nature can be given simply because our terms which are meant to describe this or that object cannot be applicable to that which is the source, ground and goal of all objects. The only things we may say

about it is that it is infinite (ananta) awareness (jnānam) characterized by bliss (ananda). According to the Yogavāsistha which deals with the nature of the Absolute more exhaustively and satisfactorily than any other work in Sanskrit, the nature of the Absolute Reality "cannot be satisfactorily talked about or discussed. It can only be experienced within the depth of one's own being" (VIb.31.37). And that which we experience within the innermost and the deepest stratum of our being is what "cannot be expressed in words, what cannot be even indirectly indicated, what cannot be named, and what is not the object of any of our senses" (Yogavāsistha VIb.52.57). "It is neither a being, nor a non-being, nor anything between the two. It is nothing, yet everything. It cannot be grasped by mind and expressed in words. It is empty of all possible contents, yet is the deepest of all enjoyments" (Yogavāsistha, III.119.23). This limitless and eternal being is perpetually manifesting in the world process by its own internal and inherent Urge. It expresses itself in the form of the infinite many without losing its basic Unity. It allows birth, growth, decay and death to take place by its side without experiencing any one of these changes within itself. The most common word for the Absolute in India is Brahman. Search for the nature of Brahman and effort to experience It within ourselves are the main pursuits of Indian philosophy and Religion.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL BEINGS

Being thus rooted in the same Brahman, all the individuals and beings in the universe are interconnected. Although apparently isolated on the surface, we are like islands in an ocean connected with each other by land at the bottom of the ocean. We are pervaded and permeated by a common Self behind us which is Brahman. It is identically the same in all beings, however isolated and different they may appear on the surface. None of us is thus alien to others. This great fact was revealed to Rama by his teacher Vasistha in these words, "How can the thought that some one is one's brother and another is not hold good when there is one and the same all-pervading Self present in all of us?. O Ram, beings of all species are your brothers, as there is no being who is unconnected with you." (Yogavāsistha, V.20.4; V.18.46). We struggle, hate each other, and quarrel and fight until we realize this spiritual identity and interconnectedness. But when we understand that we are like branches of the same tree or like limbs, organs, and cells of the same body, and are thus interconnected with each other, our attitude in life changes. Fellowship, co-operation, sympathy and goodwill begin to characterize our life. Harmony and happiness characterize those lives which are based on the realization of this principle. The Isha Upanishad, one of the oldest of the Upanishads, stated this realization in the following words, "Whosoever beholds all beings in the same Self and the same Self in all beings does not hate anybody. When a man knows that all beings are ultimately the Self and realizes this unity in experience, then there remains no delusion or grief for him". The Bhagavadgīta and the Yogavāsistha very elaborately deal with this idea and base their ethics of universal brotherhood and benevolence on it.

CONSTITUTION OF MAN AND THE COSMOS

To understand man and Nature in details we must examine the constitution of man. Quite long ago Indian psychologists discovered that in living his life from day to day, man passes into several types of

experiences. Three types of them are known to every one of us but not understood properly by most of us, namely, the Waking Experience, the Dream and the Deep Sleep. In the waking experience our consciousness works in the physical realm with physical body, physical senses and in relation to physical objects. The world of our waking experience is the world with which our theoretical and practical sciences deal. We do not, however, live in the physical realm for all the time of our life. For some hours at least every day we pass into another realm of existence, namely, the realm of dreams. In dream states of our experience our world of objects, our bodies, our sensory and motor mechanism of knowledge and reaction, and our personalities are more or less mental in their constitution. We are more or less cut off from the physical world of the waking experience. Even the time and space of the physical order are not retained in the dream state, where we experience quite a different order of time and space. What is a moment of waking state is sometimes felt as long ages in dream, and while the body of the dreamer continues to lie in his bed he has an experience of travelling far and wide and seeing a vast world with his dream body and senses. The personality of the waking experience does not very often continue to be felt as that of the dreaming subject. An unhealthy, crippled, or miserable man may in his dream feel quite the opposite. Despite all these differences between the two experiences there is something in us which is identically the same between the two states. Otherwise it would be difficult to realize that both the states are our own experiences. We own both as our experiences and remember one in the other. Modern psychology and philosophy have not yet given enough thought to understanding the nature and significance of dream. Other than and different from both these is a third state of experience which all of us undergo for some time during our existence of twenty-four hours. It is a unique kind of experience which we all like to enjoy and which plays a very important role in our life. It is the state of dreamless sleep in which we are conscious of nothing but the bare existence of ourselves. Mind, senses, body and even personality, with all sorts of mental and physical objects, pass out of our experience in the deep dreamless sleep, and yet there is something in us that keeps awake to know that we know nothing. It is something identical between the three states of waking, dream and sleep, and it is that which remembers the experience of sleep in the waking world. The experience of sleep is objectless, yet it is extremely pleasant and joyful, and every one of us prefers to have it over the other two. We take help of chemical and mechanical means to go to sleep if we cannot get it ordinarily. So far as the affective aspect of the three states is concerned, it cannot be denied that the deep dreamless sleep is the most pleasant, and the dream state comes next, and the waking one the last. Occasionally we are lifted into a unique state of forgetfulness of both mental and physical objects, when we are in a momentary contact with the abstract ideas of Truth, Goodness or Beauty. In such rare moments we get so much identified with and merged into the object that we lose all consciousness of time, space and differences. Through the process of Rāja Yoga, such momentary experiences of joy and delight can be prolonged and turned into a unique experience of objectless, thoughtless, and differenceless blissful existence, from which nobody would like to return to any of the above mentioned three states of experience. This fourth experience, which is called Samādhi in India, is a unique state in which there is an extremely delightful awareness of being timeless, limitless, and differenceless something which cannot be described in words. The only symbol that can very imperfectly indicate the experience is effulgence, illumination or Light. A yogi, who could remain in the state of Samādhi for any

length of the time of wakeful world, described his experience as that of "immeasurably delightful and cool effulgence of millions of suns in which there is no longing for anything". There is nothing mysterious about it. It is attainable by every man and woman with the help of a teacher who has already experienced it.

Indian thinkers have taken into consideration all types of experience to understand the nature of man. Our modern view of man is based only on the study of our waking experience. It is therefore bound to be incomplete and erroneous. Indian psychologists and philosophers have pondered deep on all aspects of experience and have tried to understand man in the light of them. They have tried to analyse and synthesize all the states of experience in which man passes and can pass, into one whole concept of man. Through a thorough understanding of man they have tried to understand the constitution of the cosmos, for whatever is present in man, who is a part of the cosmos, and in whom the entire cosmos is represented, must be correspondingly present in the cosmos. The cosmos is man writ large and man is the cosmos in miniature, in the same way as the atom is now regarded by physical science as a solar system in miniature. It is a common saying in India that whatever is present in man is present in the Universe as a whole. (yat pinde tat Brahmande). There is a thorough-going correspondence between the two. According to the Jnana-sankalini Tantra the human body is the key to all knowledge about the Universe (Dehastha sarva-vidya). In the light of the various experiences man passes or can pass through, Indians have come to the conclusion that man is not a physical entity alone. He is mental as well as spiritual at the same time. Correspondingly, nature also has physical, mental and spiritual aspects and realms. Vedanta-sara, a small treatise on the Vedanta philosophy, has worked out in details a comprehensive theory of man and Universe on the basis of the various types of human experience. Space does not permit us to go into those details here. It is enough to say that modern philosophy will be very much enlightened and benefited by a study of Indian anthroposophy.

The most important and the most general thing worth knowing about the constitution of man is that he is the Spirit manifesting itself through three vehicles or bodies, namely, the Causal Body, the Subtle Body, and the Physical Body. The physical body, of which alone the modern man is conscious, functions in the waking experience, the subtle body functions in the dream experience; and the causal body in the deep sleep. The physical body is called annamaya sharira (body made of what we eat). It is born of the parents' body and dies at what we call death. It is enlivened, moved and controlled by the Subtle Body (Sukshama Sharira) which is constituted by the vital energies (pranas), sensory and motor powers (Jnanendriyani and karmendriyani), subtle elements, mind, intelligence and ego. The subtle body does not get dissolved and pass into nothing at the death of the physical body. It goes out of the latter and lives and moves in the subtle planes of the cosmos which correspond to our dream state for some time, and experiences there the states of heaven or hell spoken of in all religious scriptures. After some time, determined by the desires and acts of the individual, it again returns to the physical plane and enters a newly conceived body, and thus resumes its worldly career. It is really with the subtle body that man knows, feels, thinks and acts in the physical body and on the physical plane. In dream the subtle body gets isolated from the physical body temporarily and functions more or less independently

of the latter. The causal body is still finer in structure and function. In it are stored in very minute forms all the past experiences of the subtle body. The causal body is the organ of conscience, intuition, telepathy, clairvoyance, psychometry and other remarkable powers of man. It functions on the causal plane of the Universe which can be approached by us in sleep, deep trance and mystic experiences. It is the constant basis and support of the subtle and the physical bodies, which function on the mental and physical planes. All the phenomena that take place in the life of an individual for which we cannot account in terms of matter and mind, have their root in the causal body of the individual and in the causal plane of the universe. Through and behind these three bodies functions the Spirit (Atman) of the individual which, in Indian culture, is regarded as identical with the Spirit of the whole Universe, as has already been pointed out.

REINCARNATION AND THE LAW OF KARMA OR COSMIC JUSTICE.

Man, being the Spirit functioning through the three bodies, causal, subtle and physical, cannot be said to perish into nothing at the death of the physical body. Physical death affects only the physical body and cannot do any harm to the other two bodies. The only way it affects them is that they cease to function on the physical plane of the cosmos. They continue to exist and function on their own planes. Just as when the physical body goes to sleep the mind functions in the dream state, so when the physical body is dead, the subtle body begins to function in the subtle plane of the cosmos and to have various kinds of experiences there. This plane is what is called the spiritual world by spiritualists and psychical researchers. It is on this plane, which corresponds to our dream state, that the dead personalities live until they take their rebirth on the physical plane which corresponds to our waking experience. What death does is that it shuts off the physical world from the dead by destroying their physical body. It opens, however, a finer subtle world quite as rich in contents as the physical one, perhaps even richer. Modern spiritualistic literature is full of the description of this world and personalities living therein. It is perhaps superior to our physical world in many respects.

Why do we then come back to the physical world when the spiritual world is superior to it? It is because we have entertained many desires connected with this world which still remain to be fulfilled, and because we have incurred here many debts that we have to pay off, and because we have to undergo the consequences of the deeds done in our previous lives on this plane. Desire is the most potent force in our life, and early or late all our desires get fulfilled. But as our desires affect others, and by our acting in accordance with our desires we do good or evil to others, there is a law of retribution that governs the life of all free agents in the universe. It is called the Law of Karma-phala, or simply as the Law of Karma. No one can escape it. "Even the gods have to undergo the good and evil consequences of their acts", says the author of the Mahābhārata. It is stated in the Yogavāsistha, "There is no place in the Universe - no mountain, no sky, no ocean, no heaven - where one does not undergo the good or evil consequences of the deeds done by one" (III.95.33). For an Indian it is not difficult to understand that the Law of Karma operates in the world, but for others it is a concept very difficult to grasp. It is unquestionably believed in India that all our

voluntary acts which affect others agreeably or disagreeably, favourably or unfavourably, are rewarded or punished in accordance with the strict law of justice. A Hindu holds that the Cosmic Order is Divine and therefore just and properly maintained. Cosmic justice demands that there should be strict and equitable retribution in nature. There is some arrangement in nature to keep strict balance of action and reaction. Cosmic agencies keep an account of all our deeds and place us in situations under which they can be rightly retributed. Thus no one can escape or evade the good or evil consequences of his deeds accruing to him. If he does not meet the consequences in this life here and now he must do so in some other life, for he does not die completely. The doer of the deeds, the personality of the doer, never dies. There would be chaos and rule of injustice in the universe if one were to cease to exist without having undergone the consequences of his deeds. Death, being a common experience of every living being at some time, it cannot be considered a punishment for any deed. Death, as has already been said, is only a change in our experience. It shuts the physical world from us and awakens us into a subtler world. Our desires and our record of deeds again and again bring us back to the physical world. Life here must presuppose a previous life to account for the inequalities of circumstances and life. Death must lead to another life to make the dying person undergo retribution for what he has done in life. Pre-existence and post-existence are implied in the law of justice. Rebirth or Reincarnation is thus not only a fact known directly to the seers but also a logical necessity. Reason and justice both demand continuity of life. Kant, the great German philosopher, regarded immortality or continuity of life after death as a postulate of moral consciousness. Some of the western thinkers of modern times who have pondered over the problems of life from this point of view, have appreciated both these doctrines, namely, reincarnation and the law of Karma. It may not be out of place to quote some of them here. Ralph Shirley writes, "Of all conceivable solutions of the Cosmic Riddle, this theory (reincarnation) presents the fewest difficulties of acceptance" (Shirley: The Problem of Rebirth, p. 7.). "The reincarnationist can explain on his hypothesis the infinitely diverse states and conditions under which the various members of the human race are born upon the earth". "The reincarnationist can at least believe in eternal justice, in a law of universal equilibrium, if we may call it so, without being guilty of absurdity. He may believe in a future life, because he believes in past lives, without which any existence after death would be violence to his judgment and common sense. He may, in short, be rational without being a pessimist. Reincarnation explains much which heredity fails to elucidate. It offers a solution., of the much vexed problem of the methods by which evolution came about, a solution which no other hypothesis has so far been successful in propounding" (Ibid, p. 9). Osborn writes, "A reasonable hypothesis with a high degree of probability, and one which satisfies a desire for explanation of life's inequalities, and provides a concept of law and purpose in events which otherwise seem capricious" (Osborn: The Superphysical, p. 284). "I do not know of any other theory which provides so satisfactory an answer to many of the problems of daily experience" (Ibid, p. 285).

Percy Colson says, "Reincarnation, true or hypothetical, is an extremely plausible, and in many ways, satisfactory explanation of this puzzling universe" (Percy Colson: The Future of Faith, p. 195). According to Walker, "It alone gradually solves the problems of life" (Walker: Reincarnation, p. 47). About the law of Karma, Paul Brunton, a great student of Indian wisdom says, "Karma is perfectly scientific law" (Brunton: Hidden Teachings Beyond Yoga, p. 329). "Whatever we do unto others is returned to us in some way and at some time. Life pays us back in our own coin. We get what we give" (Ibid. p. 330). James Allen, a great seer of England writes, "Perfect justice upholds the universe; perfect justice regulates human life and conduct. All the varying conditions of life, as they obtain in the world today, are the result of this law reacting on human conduct. Man can (and does) choose what causes he shall set in operation, but he cannot choose the nature of effects; he can decide what thoughts he shall think, what deeds he shall do, but he has no power over the result of those thoughts and deeds; these are regulated by the over-ruling law. Man has all power to act, but his power ends with the act committed. The result of the act cannot be altered, anulled or escaped; it is irrevocable. Evil thoughts and deeds produce conditions of suffering; good thoughts and deeds determine conditions of blessedness". (James Allen: Book of Meditations, p. 248).

THE FOUR ENDS OF LIFE: WEALTH, ENJOYMENT, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.

Life is thus not a meaningless accident. It is a continuous process. It is governed by two principles, namely, Desire-fulfilment and Law of Karma, as we have already stated. Early or late, in this birth or another, we get whatever we desire and work for but at the same time we have to undergo the good or evil consequences of our deeds in accordance with the strict principle of retribution. As we are free agents we are not being led in any direction by any other force than our own will, working, of course, under the law of Karma. Our own desire and will determine our future. Guided by our desires and controlled by the cosmic law of just retribution, we are afloat on the vast ocean of existence. Desire is the key to our destiny, for we act in accordance with our desires.

Our desires are innumerable and unlimited. Many of them conflict with others. We have to choose some and reject others. As it has already been pointed out, we are endowed with a power of discrimination and control. With the help of this power we should bring about an order in the realm of our desires. We have various kinds of desires. Some of them are for enjoyment of the pleasures of the world and for possessions of the goods of this world while others are for moral perfection and spiritual freedom and peace. Ancient Indians realized that the whole of our life should not be devoted to the pursuit of wealth and pleasure, for the real man, the spirit within us, cannot be satisfied by them alone. The Kathopanishad classified all the desires under two heads, namely, the preya (pleasant ones, that is, aiming at pleasures) and the shreya (aiming at the good of the soul), and by the story of the boy Nachikotas emphasized that the latter should be preferred to the former.

The Lord of Death offered to the little boy all the wealth, power and enjoyment possible in the world but wanted to keep the secret of life and death to himself. The boy refused to accept them because they did not promise lasting, final and unconditional satisfaction to the soul, for which it yearns. In another illustration of the Upanishads, Maitreyi, the wife of the royal priest, Yājnavalkya, refused to accept the gift of his wealth on the eve of his retirement from the householder's life, simply because wealth gave no promise of immortality for which her soul yearned like that of her retiring husband. The young Gautama left his beautiful wife, newly born little son, royal palace, and the kingdom to which he was heir, simply because he realized that these objects of pleasure were also the sources of pain and did not ensure lasting happiness. It was enlightenment, Buddahood for which he wandered from place to place and which he preferred to kingship. The tragedy of the modern western life is that the entire life is spent in the pursuit of those very objects which little Indian boys like Nachiketas and Gautam and a woman like Maitreyi discarded as the unsatisfactory ends of life. The modern man is generally sad, unhappy, discontented and pessimistic. He does not know any higher purpose in life than earning of wealth and enjoyment of sensual and sexual pleasures, which consume all his energies. Indian sages did not altogether despise and hate wealth and enjoyments. They knew that acquisitiveness and sex were very powerful and important drives of man. But they also knew that unprincipled acquisition of wealth and unbridled enjoyment of sensual and sexual pleasures lead to bodily exhaustion, disease and ruin and social disharmony and conflicts. They discovered that acquisition of wealth and enjoyment of pleasures, in order to remain healthy pursuits, have to be guided and controlled by moral principles such as Truth, Justice, Honesty, Sincerity, Kindness, Fellow-feeling, moderation, social propriety, and self-restraint, etc. They realized that observance of moral principles ensures greater individual happiness and social peace than unrestricted and unprincipled pursuit of wealth and pleasure. They knew that there is a deeper joy in life which is more abiding and more native to the soul than that which possessions and enjoyments can yield. They discovered that the source of this unconditional and abiding joy was within ourselves. To realize this abiding, unconditional and supreme happiness which springs up from within ourselves when we have freed ourselves from the pursuit of pleasures of the outside world, was considered to be the greatest object of human life. Taking into consideration all the needs of life, and so formulating a very comprehensive ideal of life, the Indian thinkers prescribed the following four objects of life to be pursued by every man and woman: (1) Dharma, or observance of moral principles which alone ensure individual happiness and social peace, (2) Artha, acquisition of wealth or the means that make life comfortable and ensure satisfaction of worldly needs, (3) Kama, moderate and controlled enjoyment of sensual and sexual pleasures, and Moksha, Spiritual freedom and perfection in which an individual rises to the status of Divinity here and now. Not one of these ends exclusively but all of them together in life constitute the ideal of Indian culture.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF LIFE, THE SUMMUM BONUM.

Spiritual Perfection and Freedom mentioned above is the ultimate purpose of our life, without having achieved which we shall not be happy. It is the goal for which consciously or unconsciously we are all striving. It is a long process for most of the souls, but by those who have set their heart on it, it can be achieved more or less quickly. Differences of opinion about the nature of the goal and about the proper methods of reaching it are bound to prevail. Indian culture has a knack of synthesizing differences into a systematic whole. In the Upanishads, Bhagavadgita and Yogavāsistha, which are the most valuable works dealing with the subject of spiritual perfection and methods leading to it, we find very important hints, which no seeker after spiritual perfection can afford to ignore. Spiritual perfection, according to these works, consists in a conscious realization of identity with the Whole in all its aspects. On the physical level the individual has to consciously feel that his body is an organic part of the cosmos. On the mental level, he has to realize that all his thoughts, emotions and actions are interlinked with those of the cosmic mind. On the causal plane, he must feel that he is very intimately connected with all the finer forces of the world, and spiritually he must realize that he is the Absolute Reality Itself and nothing less. This realization of oneness and interconnectedness with everything else is our summum bonum. The essential and common factors in all the methods of attaining this consciousness of Identity with the Absolute are two: (1) Gradual removal of the sense of a false ego which asserts itself to be something separate and independent of the Whole, through right thinking, active sympathy and compassion for all beings irrespective of species, race, colour, creed, community, family or sex, and acts of self-sacrifice in every day life. (2) Expansion of the Self on all planes of existence and in all aspects of one's being, by becoming aware of the cosmic influences, forces and realities affecting us every moment and determining what we are, and thereby identifying ourselves with all that determines our being. Through these two simultaneous processes of denying the false little self and affirming the real limitless Self in various ways on the physical, mental, causal and spiritual levels, the individual gradually acquires a greater and greater consciousness of his being a centre of the Whole, and, in course of time, instead of being conscious at the centre and of the centre alone he becomes conscious of being the Whole, loves every one as himself, and acts for the good of everybody. He remains happy under all circumstances for he knows that everything in the Whole belongs to him. Nothing is alien to him anywhere and he feels oneness with all. Here and now he is at home with the Universe. He is a completely transfigured man, and in place of a selfish seeker of his own happiness, he now seeks for the happiness of all around him, and naturally scatters joy and life around him. He is called a Jīvanmukta, a liberated living man. The Yogavāsistha gives a detailed description of the jivanmukta, which is worth knowing. Here is a brief summary of what has been said about such a person in the Yogavāsistha:-

"Pleasures do not delight him; pains do not distress. There is no feeling of like or dislike produced in his mind even towards serious,

violent, and continued states of pleasure or pain. Although externally engaged in worldly actions, he has no attachment in his mind to any object whatsoever. His conduct does not annoy anybody; he behaves like an ideal citizen and is a friend of all. Outwardly he is very busy, but at heart very calm and quiet. He is free from the restrictions of caste, creed, stage of life (āshrama), custom and scriptures. He rests unagitated in the Supreme Bliss. He does not work to get anything for himself. He is always happy, and never hangs his joy on anything else. His face is never without the lustre of cheerfulness on it. He behaves with his fellow beings as the occasion and the status of the person demand, without the least stain on his mind......In spite of being occupied with actions appropriate to the time, place and circumstances, he is not touched by pleasure or pain arising from them. He never feels despondent, proud, agitated, cast down, troubled or elated. He is full of mercy and magnanimity even when surrounded by enemies... He works without any anxiety, egoistic feeling, pride or impurity of heart. He does not discard the pleasures that he has got, nor desires the pleasures he has not got. He finds equal pleasure in old age, death, misery, poverty and in ruling over an empire. He keeps his body healthy, and does not starve it of its appropriate requirements... The life of a liberated sage is really the noblest and happiest life. From him goodness is scattered all around. Having seen him, having heard about him, having met him, and having remembered him, all creatures feel delighted". (B. L. Atreya: Yogavāsistha and Its Philosophy, p. 96-100).

This ideal can be attained by every man and woman only if he or she works for it. There is no restriction of sex, caste or creed for it. The Yogavāsistha quotes an example of Chudala, a ruling queen, who became a jivanmukta long before her husband king Shikhidhwaja could become one under her own guidance. Kabir, a Muslim weaver, attained the status of a jivanmukta. Mahatma Gandhi became one in spite of his intense political activity. King Janaka, in ancient times, was a jivanmukta, in spite of his being a ruler. In fact, in India, when it was free and was ruled by its own kings, it was considered desirable that before a prince assumed the responsibilities of kingship, he should have attained the status of a jivanmukta. The great Indian king Rama, after whom an ideal form of government is called 'Rama Rajya', a favourite phrase of Mahatma Gandhi, was given practical training in the art of attaining spiritual freedom by his family sage Vasistha. These teachings are recorded in the great spiritual work known as Yogavāsistha. Plato's idea that philosophers alone should be kings is probably of Indian origin, as we read in Manu's work, "It is only those who are steeped in the wisdom of the Vedas and other Scriptures that deserve to be military generals, kings, magistrates and rulers of men" (Manusmriti). India has always been proud of its saints and sages who have in all ages been friends, philosophers and guides of kings, if not themselves kings.

DHARMA OR ETHICAL PRINCIPLES.

Next to Moksha (spiritual freedom) in importance and value is Dharma (moral Principles) among the four ends of life. In fact Brahman and Dharma are the two most important terms in Indian culture and most of its literature is devoted to the exposition of these two basic ideas. It is very difficult to translate the word dharma into English or any other foreign language. It is often wrongly translated as 'religion'. The

nearest word in English to dharma is 'Duty'. But it does not convey the full sense in which the sanskrit word 'dharma' is used. Manu, one of the earliest leaders of Indian social thought, derives the word dharma from the Sanskrit root Dhri which means to support, to hold, to maintain, to protect or to keep in balance, and says that dharma is what maintains or holds in unity all the creatures of the world. Kanada, another great thinker of India defines dharma as that which leads to prosperity and spiritual well-being. Every one of us is advised by the author of the Mahābhārata, the great Epic of India, to follow dharma even at the cost of our individual lives. "Never should one forsake dharma for pleasure, for fear, for any worldly gain, or even for life". In Jaina literature dharma is defined as that which raises the soul higher in status. In Buddhistic works dharma is the very essence of any being. What then is the concrete nature of dharma? Manu defines Dharma as Ten Moral Principles which every human being should follow in life so that all creatures may live in peace. They are: (1) Dhriti, Patience and Perseverance, (2) Kshama, Forgiveness, (3) Dama, Control of Passions and Ideas, (4) Asteyam, Abstinence from misappropriation of other's property, (5) Shaucha, Cleanliness of body, mind and spirit, (6) Indriya-nigraha, Control of the Senses, (7) Dhi, Cultivation of Reasonableness or Use of Reason, (8) Vidyā, Acquirement of Knowledge, (9) Satya, Truthfulness, and (10) Akrodha, Mastery over Anger. It is a very comprehensive list of the most general principles which if adhered to in life will certainly not only make an individual life happy and prosperous but will also create a healthy social atmosphere in which everybody will feel secure. The author of the Mahabhārata gives a still simpler and briefer concept of dharma in the following words: "Do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to you; and wish for others what you desire and long for yourself --This is the essence of Dharma. Heed it well." This principle is what has been called the Golden Rule of Conduct. It has been preached by almost all the prophets of the world at all times and in all countries. If all of us could follow this principle in our lives - individual, social, communal, and national - there would be no trouble in the world. The world is a hell today because we do not base our conduct on moral principles. We are selfish, greedy and unmindful of others' interests.

NO WORD FOR "RIGHTS" IN INDIAN CULTURE. DUTIES FOR THE SAKE OF DUTIES.

A very remarkable thing about Indian culture is that there is no concept of "rights" in it. While there is much talk about duties in its literature, there is nowhere any mention of "rights" which play a very leading role in modern social life. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, teaches his friend Arjuna to perform the duties that are demanded by his station in life, without any expectation of any gain or reward from any quarter. He regards the performance of one's duties without any hope of gain or reward as the best worship of God. In modern age, unfortunately, everybody thinks more of his rights than of his duties. What are these rights of which we now think more than of our duties? "Rights" is simply a glorified word for our individual and selfish interests. They are sublimated forms of our animal wants. Indian thinkers and writers have said that it is natural for man to demand satisfaction of his natural desires. Why should we emphasize them, glorify them and plead for them? We are naturally prone to assert them. Why should we add to their force by enlisting the power of will on their side? If every one were careful

of performing his duties, and were willing to give to others what he expects from them, there would be no need of asserting rights. Assertion of rights, demands of rights and quarrels for rights lead to strife and war. In Indian culture an attempt was made to make men forget them. Good and great men in society never talked of rights but always of duties and others followed them. People worried more about their debts than their dues. An elaborate theory of man's debts (Rina) was developed. According to this theory every individual has to pay off the following debts: (1) Deva-rina, debt to the forces of Nature, for the invaluable gifts of air, fire, water, food etc. In lieu of those we have to make some offerings of our own to the gods who control nature, as tokens of our gratitude. (2) Pitri-rina, debt to the parents and to the Society for their having given birth to us and having brought us up. This debt is paid off by bringing forth and bringing up children and by contributing to the well-being of the family and the society. (3) Rishi-rina, debt to the teachers, discoverers and inventors who have brought civilization to this stage and to whom we owe our knowledge. We pay off this debt by making some contribution to knowledge, by writing books and by teaching others. A little reflection will convince us that we owe so much to others that it is really difficult to shake off the obligation. To get rid of the obligation to others for our own good we have to do good to others. Keeping this in view Indian culture has prescribed five types of Yajnas or 'sacrifices'.

THE FIVE 'GREAT SACRIFICES'

Yajna (sacrifice) is another very significant and characteristic term of Indian culture. The Vedas and the later literature based on them, enjoin upon every individual to perform several types of yajnas. According to the Bhagavadgita yajna is the most essential duty of man. Unfortunately the word yajna has been very much misunderstood both in India and by western scholars. It has been taken only to mean performance of certain rites in which oblations of various kinds are offered to fire. This kind of yajna is only a symbol of offering of what belongs to one to the Whole for the benefit of all beings. Agni is the name of God who pervades all beings, in the Vedas. Every Hindu is expected to give up as much as he can for the good of others. By 'others' are not meant only human beings, but all creatures in the world, both visible and invisible. The society to which we belong and for the good of which we should make offerings includes, not only animals of various kinds living in air, water, and on and in the earth, but also spirits and gods who live in the invisible worlds around us. Every man is expected to keep friendly relations with all beings around him, by offering to them whatever little he can. Hindu culture has, therefore, worked out a scheme of five kinds of offerings (yajnas) to be followed by every man who earns and has something to offer. They are (1) Deva yajna, offerings to gods or the powers which control nature and its various phenomena, (2) Rishi Yajna, offerings to the great seers and sages who have advanced civilization and culture and have given us wisdom, (3) Pitri Yajna, offerings to our ancestors and parents, (4) Bhuta Yajna, offerings to the various species of creatures that surround us in this world, and (5) Nri Yajna, offerings to fellow human beings.
Offerings to gods are made in the form of oblations, prayers and gratitude for the great gifts of nature, such as water, air, fire,

electricity etc. Offerings to the Sages and Seers consist in imparting knowledge to others and in making discoveries and inventions for the benefit of humanity. Offerings to the ancestors and parents consist in remembering with love and affection the dead ones and in being serviceable to the living parents and grandparents. We should now and then celebrate anniversaries of births or deaths of our ancestors and make offerings of our love, gratitude and good wishes to them on those occasions. All Hindus remember their ancestors in a fortnight of a particular month when they feed poor Brahmans on behalf of their ancestors. Offerings to other creatures than human beings that surround us consist in keeping friendly relations with them, feeding them now and then, and giving them protection and affection whenever they need. Before he takes his lunch every Hindu is expected to keep aside some morsels of his food for birds, dogs and other animals. He is enjoined to feel kinship with every animal and act accordingly. Offerings to fellow human beings consist in doing as much good and service to one's fellows as possible. We must help the needy and should part with an appreciable amount of our income for charitable purposes. In India almost every rich man thought it his duty and privilege to build public wells, resthouses for travellers, gardens for the use of all, and hospitals not only for men but also for animals. Almost every city in India, and particularly those which are frequently visited by people from outside, has one or more Dharmashalas (free lodging houses) for travellers, Dāna, giving to the poor and needy as much as one can give, is a part of this yajna. On certain occasions kings and rich people are enjoined to give away all they have for the good of the society and service of the poor; and they part with their wealth on such occasions with delight. In fact in the hey-day of Hindu culture rich men and kings vied with one another in giving away and not in accumulating wealth. Greatness in those days was measured by the capacity of giving and not by possessions. The Bhāgavata Purāna, one of the most widely read and respected sanskrit books in India, says that 'a man should possess only as much as is necessary for his maintenance. He who accumulates more than he needs for bare living is a thief'. (Srimad Bhagawata, VII.14.8). One of the forms of Nri Yajna, offerings to mankind, is hospitality to a stranger (atithi-satkara). A stranger who happens to visit one or to meet one without any previous acquaintance or notice, is looked upon as a god, and all facilities and services offered to him are regarded as service to God. In one of the Convocation Addresses of ancient India, the teacher exhorts the new graduates to look upon every stranger as a God and to treat him as God. (Taittiriya Upanishad XI.2). A Hindu is expected to look upon every human being as his brother or sister, nay, as himself, and upon humanity as his family. A sanskrit writer says, "It is only petty-minded persons who make a distinction between theirs and others. Those who have great hearts look upon the whole world as their own family". Another writer says, "He who looks upon others as himself really sees".

HINDU SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

It is in this spirit of human solidarity that Hindus organized their social life in the pattern of four vocations (Chatur Varna) and four stages (Ashramas). Varna Vyavasthā or vocational organization of members of the society, which Hindu culture propagates, is not the present caste system into which it has degenerated on account of India having been ruled by foreign powers for centuries. It was not meant to divide society but to

bring about organic unity in it. It was based on those fundamental psychological and sociological principles, which, according to an Indian thinker well versed in Western and Indian thought, "are fit for use in modern conditions also; and, if properly applied, can solve all problems that are harassing mankind today" (Bhagavan Das: World War and Its Cure - World Order and World Religion p.480). The word Varna comes from a root Vri which means 'to choose". Varana or varna means choice. Varna Vyvasthā means a social organiation based on free choice of vocations in accordance with one's vocational aptitudes determined by heredity and vocational training. Its purpose is not to divide people into castes or classes, as it is generally supposed to be by those who have not studied it, but to integrate the society into one whole by giving each type of individual a suitable vocational place in it. It aims at efficiency, satisfaction, and co-operation. The modern society in the West is in a chaotic condition. There is a great struggle for existence, power, wealth and superiority. All people seek for one and the same thing, namely wealth and power. Ancient Indians who planned society on the basis of varna understood human nature better and planned a pattern of society in which there would be less chaos, less struggle and less dissatisfaction. They found out that all people by nature fall into four types. Each of these types has its distinctive vocational aptitude, distinctive desires, distinctive pleasures, and distinctive ways of living and dressing etc. There is a type of people who seek for knowledge and enlightenment and would be quite happy and contented if society offered them opportunities to pursue knowledge unhampered and to give it to others. These people do not care for power and wealth as long as they are allowed by the society to go on with their own hobby of getting more and more knowledge and spreading it. What they would like to possess are books, laboratories, apparatus of observation, and facilities for investigation and travelling. Their main recreation consists in contemplation on God and communion with nature. They hanker more for respect, reverence and public esteem than for anything else. The main end of their life is Self-realization and their learning and high character are the only powers over others. They cannot rule, but they can guide the rulers. They cannot be rich and powerful nor do they want to be. The second type of people are those who love and seek power. They are men of action rather than men of knowledge. By nature and training they are able to administer and execute. Their main livelihood can be military or executive jobs. Their possessions are weapons and articles of pomp and show, and their recreations are various kinds of sports and games. Their main source of strength is military valour. They fail when they wrongly select a teaching profession. The third type of people are those who neither care for knowledge nor for power but for wealth and property. By temperament they are acquisitive, greedy and commercial. Their main source of income is trade, profit and speculation. Their main craving is for wealth and their main recreation lies in trials of luck and in making plans that will bring more and more money. They excel at counting, calculating and planning. They can very well manage economic affairs of the society and organize industrial, agricultural and other concerns of the state. Their main source of strength is their wealth and capacity to amass wealth. There is a fourth type of people who are born with a low intelligence quotient and consequently with little or no interest in science or philosophy, in administration or in economic organization. By temperament they are unambitious, lazy and ease-loving, but they are capable of working hard when made to work by others.

They exert when only they need doing so for earning their livelihood. Their main source of income is wages for their unskilled or a little trained and skilled labour. Their sources of recreation are gross sensual and sexual pleasures, intoxicating drugs, and alcohol. Their main source of strength lies in their capacity to work and in physical endurance. They are incapable of fitting into jobs which require much thinking, executive strength or organizing capacity. They can work only under the guidance, control and command of others. All these types of people are, however, organic parts of society. The Rig Veda compared them to the head, hands, abdomen, and legs of the human body.

Indian social thinkers organized an order of society in which each of the types mentioned above could find a suitable vocation and facilities for carrying on the work that is after its own heart, all serving the society in accordance with the best that each can give and getting the delight consequent upon performing its duty in the best way. Heredity, training, personal choice and social selection all played their proper part in assuming the role of a particular profession which was called a varna. The four typical professions, having innumerable varieties within each, were named as Learned, Executive, Commercial and Labouring professions, and the four types engaged in them were called Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Each of them was a complement to the rest. They were organically related to each other as the various parts of the body are. There was no reason for conflict and class war, as each type had to give something to others and also to get from others much of what it needed for its life and health. No professional class was self-sufficient, yet each class was indispensable. Each class had initiative enough to contribute its best to the society as a whole. Gerald Heard, a great American thinker and writer who has studied the Indian Social system has called it "Organic Democracy", and thinks that it is the type of democracy the world as a whole needs today in his work, Man the Master. Heard defines "Organic Democracy" as "The rule of the people who have organized themselves in a living and not a mechanical relationship; where instead of all men being said to be equal, which is a lie, all men are known to be of equal value, could we but find the position in which their potential contribution could be released and their essential growth so pursued" (Heard: Man the Master, p. 129). He calls the four varnas by the names "Seers" (Brahmans), "Politicians" (Kshatriyas), "Technicians" (Vaishyas) and "Coherers". "These four classes" he thinks like an Indian, "are distinguished by unmistakable psychological characteristics which suit them to their particular purpose, function and place" (Ibid, p. 143). It is this organization that made Indian Society stable, efficient and strong. It produced in India great scholars, great warriors, great administrators, and great producers of wealth. P. D. Ouspensky, a thoughtful Western writer, is of the opinion that "All the most brilliant periods of history, without exception, were periods in which the social order approached the caste system" (Ouspensky: A New Model of the Universe, p. 447). He thinks that the caste system (varna Vyavasthā) "is a natural division" of society. "Whether people wish it or not, whether they recognize it or not, they are divided into four castes. There are Brahmans, there are Kshatriyas, there are Vaishyas, and there are Sudras. No human legislation, no philosophical intricacies, no pseudo-sciences and no forms of terror can abolish this fact. And the normal functioning and development of human societies are possible only if this fact is recognized

and acted on" (Ibid, p. 446). India recognized this truth long ago. Other parts of the world have yet to recognize it.

DIVISION OF LIFE INTO FOUR DISTINCT PERIODS (ASHRAMA SYSTEM)

Equally important and valuable was the planning of an individual life in four stages or periods called Ashramas. This planning was based on a psychological study of the interests, needs, capacities, characteristics and social adjustments of an individual at different stages of life from childhood to old age. Today life is a chaos and a confusion. There is little difference in the pursuits of man at different ages. From childhood to old age men and women have to earn their living, have to do almost the same kind of work, no matter whether they are fit for it or not. They pursue the same types of pleasure whether they suit them or not. With a great insight into the meaning, purpose and capacities of life, ancient Indians understood the absurdities of such a kind of living, and so mapped life out into four periods of 25 years each, taking the total span of life, when properly lived, to be of a hundred years, and assigned a proper function with its appropriate discipline to each of them. The first period is meant for building up physical, mental and spiritual health, strength and endurance. It is called the Brahmacharya Ashrama (student life). The second period is called the Grihastha Ashram in which an individual settles down into a family life and performs the duties of a householder. The third period is called the Vanaprastha Ashrama in which an individual retires from the life of a householder and along with his life companion devotes himself to the service of the society in the best way he can serve it without any idea of accumulating anything for his family which was the case when he was a householder. And the fourth period was called Sanyasa Ashram in which the individual should give up all worldly pursuits and interests and should devote himself to meditation and yoga. In accordance with the principles of biology, psychology, sociology, economics and politics, the ancient seers like Manu, Yajnvalkya, Atri and Vasistha, determined the function, the discipline, the duties, and the place in society of the individual at each stage of his life. Thus, according to their opinion, a student should do nothing else than that which is conducive to the building up of a strong and healthy body, an alert and penetrating mind, and a pure and noble soul. He has to acquire all the knowledge he can with proficiency in some vocation which he would have to choose as a householder later in life. His living must be in accordance with the requirements of his stage. At a tender age he must leave home and be a member of some educational institution where he has to live a life of mutual helpfulness in the society of other boys of his age. He has not to imitate his parents and other grown up householders in their living a life of comfort and pleasure. His is to be a life of hard work, self-denial, austerity and all sided purity. Within the time at his disposal he has to make himself a full-statured man ready to undertake the duties of a householder after stepping out of the educational institution.

The life of a householder is a very responsible life. It has also to be a disciplined life, but the discipline here is of a different kind. He has to acquire wealth, but in accordance with the principles of dharma - truth, honesty, justice, kindness and self-control, etc. He can enjoy life, not in an unbridled manner, but with moderation and restraint. He has to bring forth and bring up children without whom a household is not happy, but not without taking sufficient care that they grow into ideal boys and girls. He has to be a productive member of the society by being a thinker or inventor, or an administrator, or an agriculturist, industrialist or financier, or by being a skilful manual labourer, worker or mechanic. His home must be a happy home in which old parents, children, and women must feel happy. A home in which children are not properly taken care of,

in which women are not happy, in which old men and women are miserable, is according to Indian sages, like a hell. Prosperity, harmony and sweetness should reign in all homes. Every little home must be a little heaven.

Having lived for twenty-five years or so as a householder, an individual should withdraw his interests from the family and retire to a quiet place where he can think about deeper problems of life and thereby be of some service to the society. He is a fit person to be a legislator, an educator or an adviser to governments. It is such retired people who should take interest in social and political activities of a country and should become ambassadors and high commissioners. Ambitious youths who enter these fields and services with selfish interests and with ambitions to be rich, fail to discharge their public duties properly, and instead of being efficient public servants they make use of the opportunities that come to them for gaining more and more money, power and influence, and often fall a prey to corruption. Indian social thinkers, like Dr. Bhagavan Das, think that only people who have retired from family responsibilities and have no worldly ambitions should be entrusted with great national responsibilities. Most of the great works on philosophy, ethics and sciences have been written by those people who made a proper use of this period of life.

When the individual is no longer physically fit to do strenuous work in the service of society he must make the best use of the rest of his life by settling at some secluded and peaceful place and thinking and meditating on the deeper problems of life and the universe. In this stage he may dictate books, teach those who approach him for enlightenment and guidance. He can also make use of his time by practising some kind or other of yoga. According to Indian culture the old age should not be a miserable age. It should indeed be the most peaceful and happy stage of life in which happiness does not depend upon fleeting enjoyments of life but upon the inner light and contentment of the Spirit. The Hindu has a strong faith that life does not end in death. Death only opens a gate to another life, the quality and contents of which are determined by our own desires and actions. The last stage of this life is to be devoted to the preparation for the next one. Death is taken to be a welcome change, in which the old and worn out body is to be replaced by a new and better one. A Hindu should always die in peace, because he knows that he has nothing to lose by dying. The later half of his life is called the path of nivritti or withdrawal from the attachments to the world, and by the time he dies a normal death he quietly and peacefully leaves this world and gladly awaits entry into another through the gate of death.

REASON AND NOT SCRIPTURE TO GUIDE LIFE

Buddhi, Reason or Intelligence, is the highest mental principle in man according to Indian culture. It is this principle which determines the truth or falsity of a judgment. On its purity and use depends the happiness and peace of life. It is on its working that there is agreement among all people. Scriptures differ, emotions differ and traditions differ but there is always an agreement upon what is reasonable. Hence use of Reason is regarded as one of the above-mentioned ten principles of dharma (morality). The greatest prayer in the Vedas is for getting our Intelligence inspired. In Hindu culture, therefore, there has always been a great emphasis laid on being reasonable in all activities of life. The great sage Vasistha has advised his pupil Rama in the Yogavāsistha to be always reasonable and never to accept and do whatever is unreasonable. We shall close this essay on Indian culture by quoting three passages from the Yogavāsistha in which one of the most essential features of Indian culture finds a bold and clear expression: "A Reasonable statement, even of a child, should be accepted, while the unreasonable

ones are to be discarded like straw, even though they are made by the Creator himself. A devotee of Reason should value the works even of ordinary persons, provided they advance knowledge and are logical, and should throw away those even of the sages, if they are not such. Such a sentimental person as continues to drink the (filthy) water of a well, simply because it was dug by his dear father, leaving aside the (pure) Ganges water available near at hand, is certainly a slave under others' control" (Yogavasistha, II.18.2-4). Truth, we must remember, may be supra-rational, but it can never be irrational. Hence an Indian always relies on reason more than on anything else. He closes every activity with the following prayer: "May every being overcome difficulties, may every one look for the good; may every one have a purified reason, and may every one be happy everywhere".
